

Valka's Hiccup

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Summary: Stoick was thirty years old before his wife birthed his firstborn son. After many attempts and failures Valka finds hope painful and loss inevitable. She is the pity of her community, but her husband has faith in her. Perhaps that's all she really needs after all.

1. Silence

Valka lie in her bed weak and tired. Her husband sat beside her rocking the newly filled cradle at the side of the bed.

She'd never claim to be much of a viking, parish the thought. There was too much to be held against her in that respect. Her hatred for the viking kill or be killed lifestyle, she couldn't handle any length of time on the open seas, her love of the flying pests that raided their home and stole the food they'd worked so hard forâ€|

The fear that gripped her heart at the thought of the cradle under her beloved's fingertips.

She knew the rumors that spread around the village. She knew what the other women said about her, how many men her husband had to refrain from giving a well deserved beating for a comment on her condition.

Her eyes never left the ceiling. She couldn't bring herself to look, not at her husband, not at the cradle, and never at the wee babe that was now nestled in his father's arms.

She's finally done it. After three long summers of marriage she'd finally given him a firstborn. Finally carried a child full term.

(He's a good sized babe, butâ€|)

Stoick knew she was awake, he'd asked her multiple times if she wished to hold the child, receiving no answer each time.

(His lungs are weak,)

The women pitied her, she who married the most powerful man in the village yet couldn't bear him a child. The men suggested a concubineâ€| her heart broke at the thought.

(His heart is irregular)

Stoick had never considered the idea. The Haddock family hadn't resorted to concubines to produce an heir in recorded history and he'd let the name die completely before he tarnished it so thoroughly.

(His breath's are numbered, and the numbers are few)

Stoick rocked his dieing firstborn in his arms as he sang to the hopeless infant. She knew without looking that he held the child in a way that he could feel the babe's fragile heart beat and see the little chest rise and fall with each breath.

(I'm sorry chief, but the babe won't see his first sunrise.)

Stoick's song continued before her mind grasped the words he sang.

To love to kiss to sweetly hold

For the dancing and the dreaming

Through all life's sorrows and delights

I'll keep your laugh inside me

She should have known it would be that song. It's the only song her husband knew that wasn't a drinking melody.

(Valka, now, you mustn't blame yourself, you did all you could)

It was the slowest she'd ever heard the song sang, especially by him. It was a happy song, it could usually lift her spirits almost instantaneously.

(Stoick, what are you going to do for an heir ifâ€| ifâ€|)

This time it did little to help her.

I'll swim and sail on savage seas

With ne'er a fear of drowning

And gladly ride the waves of life...

His voice brokeâ€|

Her heart broke worse.

Not again.

2. Tears

The sixth time Valka cried.

She had husband's arms wrapped around her as she cried into his unarmored chest waiting on news of the wee babe as the midwife checked the newborn's health, her sister-in-law (her much younger sister-in-law who already had three children of her own) dressed the child, and Gothi did whatever it was that Gothi does.

It was too early, far too early. Valka didn't know how early the babe had come but she knew it was too early. The midwife hadn't even begun to prepare her yet.

She'd heard the cries this time though, it was a good sign. Maybeâ€| maybeâ€|

Valka was too scared to hope.

Stoick rubbed circles into her back, even sang for her. That same song, that beautiful betrothal melody that she loved so dearly.

This time he sang faster, an encouraging melody rather than the haunting lullaby. She drew strength from the tune, but her tears could not be controlled.

She heard footsteps nearing the door of the bedroom, they stopped just outside causing her panic to increase.

She already knew what the woman would say.

"He's small," the midwife began and Valka realizes she'd hoped without giving herself permission. "And he's pretty fragile."

The woman handed the child to Stoick since his wife made no attempt to retrieve their son.

"Will he live?" The man asked, blunt as always, but there was pain in his voice. Valka didn't know how much more her heart could take.

"He has a chance at least." The middle-aged woman gave them a guarded smile as Valka finally raised her head, a chanceâ€| he had a chance. Could it be possible, could she finally given her wonderful, loving husband a son. The midwife continued.

"He's very early as I'm sure you both know, it's pretty uncommon for a child berthed early to survive, but he seems relatively healthy, save his size. I'd give him seven days. If he's still doing well, by then he's in the clear, till then, well, Gothi has some herbs and elixirs that may increase his chances. I'll let you figure out what she's saying. Never could understand those whacked up drawings of hers myself."

The next seven days were, in Valka's mind, the cruelest form of torture. She slept little, ate more than she'd prefer ("for the babe" Stoick insisted) and terrified herself just by picking the young one

up.

Yet, she feared more when her son wasn't tucked in her arms.

Had Stoick loved her any less he may have been frustrated that he never had much of a chance to hold his child.

Stoick loved her very much.

The babe woke every hour of the night.

Valka woke twice as often

Her heart would pound, and she'd wake the very busy man trying to get some much needed rest beside her in a rush to check that her child's heart continued to beat under her fingertips, and the breaths continued to move his wee little chest up and down.

Stoick worried for her health, she knew. She wished she could hide her terror, hide it like a real viking.

But he was just so small, the smallest of them all. Could he possibly survive?

The night of the seventh day of her son's life there was no attempt to sleep, neither by her or her husband. Stoick simply held her as she held their son. She counted the breaths the babe breathed as he sang. He sang their song to the little one who just might be the one to make it, who might just survive.

"Val, look." Stoick interrupted his own song, resulting in her losing count of the child's breaths again.

She looked.

The sun rose over the village view of their windows.

The sun rising on the eighth day of her son's life.

"I told you he'd be alright, this one. He's got the heart of a fighter." Stoick said, through rarely seen tears. "Just like his mother."

"He's alive." She replied, her mind desperately grasping onto that one impossible truth. "The littlest one... he survived." Her sobs woke the child, but he didn't cry. In fact he seemed to enjoy how his mother held him tighter and buried her face into his small frame.

"Our little Hiccup." Emotion seeped into his voice the likes of which she'd not yet heard.

"Hiccup." She choked out, testing the sound of the name. "Good morning, little Hiccup. We are so glad to see you this morning. Thank you for being strong for your mama..." Her voice broke at the title and she couldn't continue. Stoick finished for her, his strong voice carrying a gentleness she loved to hear.

"Mommy and Daddy love you, Hiccup. We've waited to meet you for a long time, son. My son... Never forget how much we love you, little

Hiccup. Never forget."

* * *

><p>AN: Ever since the episode of Riders of Berk that they explain what Hiccup's name represents I wondered what kind of parents would give their child a name like that. They couldn't of known he'd be tiny for much of his life could they? And even if they had why would they name him their equivalent of runt? Then I watched the sequel and Valka said he came early, and later learned that Stoick was fifty in said sequel. Hiccup is explicitly stated to be twenty at the time. I don't claim to know how old Vikings usually married, the research I've done hasn't given me an answer to that, but from what I know of the past in general history studies people usually married much younger than they do in modern America... if this is true then why was Stoick so old when Hiccup was born? This is my answer for that.

There could be some reasoning behind her staying with the dragons included in this theory. If the village continued looking down on her because Hiccup was so small and frail, it could wear on her to the point that the freedom of the dragons could overpower her love for her husband and son. Perhaps guilt that she was unable to give Stoick a good strong heir. Childbirth could make or break a woman's reputation in some parts of history. I don't know if it applies to viking culture, but in some parts of the world a man could divorce a woman solely because she was barren.

I'm not saying she is excused for abandoning her family... but I think she could be forgiven. After all Stoick and Hiccup forgave her easily and their the ones she hurt.

I like Valka a lot, not in spite of her sins... but possibly because of them. She has faults and she admits that making her human and as such she's relatable. Not trying to diss Frozen, as I love the show, but I found not one of the characters were truly relatable because they were all too perfect. Only the bad guys do bad things willingly and they are all unforgivable. Valka and Eret, good people who have done bad things, admit they're flawed and do what they must to fix it. This is why I loved the first movie, and this is why I love the second one.

End
file.